

SECRET

25X1

B C

27 SEP 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH: Deputy Director for Intelligence

FROM: [REDACTED]
Director of East Asian Analysis

SUBJECT: Current Developments in the Philippines

25X1

1. Action Requested: None; for information only.

2. Background: Sporadic incidents of violence have continued since the mass demonstrations near the central post office in Manila on 21 September and the subsequent violent confrontation between government security forces and 10,000 marchers near the presidential palace. Public disaffection with the Marcos government is intensifying, and new fissures are appearing in the military and business community--two of President Marcos's key constitutencies. But the security situation has not gotten out of hand, and Marcos appears to be moving on two fronts to deal with unrest:

-- He has drawn the line with his opponents by abandoning the "maximum restraint" policy in evidence at Aquino's funeral, prohibiting firearms and "unlicensed" demonstrations, and threatening to arrest people in the business community, the church, and the radical opposition. He has charged dozens with sedition, and the military has revived security checkpoints in selected areas to check for weapons.

-- Marcos [REDACTED] is considering several gestures of reconciliation, including bolstering the independent commission of inquiry into Aquino's death, liberalizing the election code, and reporting the results of the government's own

25X1

25X1

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

investigation. All of these measures are expected by Philippine officials to be implemented in the next several weeks.

2. On the surface, the investigation appears to be at a standstill. The independent commission has suspended public hearings because of several suits by opposition groups that challenge its legality on the grounds of separation of powers. It may resume on 10 October, presumably with several new members appointed by Marcos. The investigation being conducted by the metropolitan police also has foundered. Nonetheless, at least one government inquiry--probably conducted under the auspices of Armed Forces Chief of Staff Ver--has produced results. We know, for example, that the government identified and investigated Aquino's assassin immediately. A dozen Air Force personnel have reportedly been detained for possible links to Aquino's assassin.

25X1
25X1

3. We continue to lack hard evidence on who bears ultimate responsibility for Aquino's assassination, but virtually all evidence, however fragmentary, points to the military. It is entirely possible that Philippine authorities have already resolved the matter and what remains for Marcos is the problem of minimizing further damage to government credibility.

25X1
25X1

4. With new security measures in place, we see no obvious flashpoints that would produce widespread unrest in the next two weeks. The moderate opposition remains in disarray, while its leaders complain that radical groups, especially those allied with the overtly non-Communist National Democratic Front, are gaining influence through better organization. The moderates want to bolster anti-government sentiment over the near term by organizing further demonstrations, but they are unlikely to achieve a major success. The radicals want to "keep their power dry" for President Reagan's visit in November, and are avoiding confrontations with the police for now. Both groups plan demonstrations for the visit, however.

25X1

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

5. The most important variable in the events that may unfold in the weeks ahead are decisions Marcos himself will make. We do not know what information he is getting about the investigation, but he has complained [redacted] recently that he cannot trust the judgment of some people close to him. There are rumors of an immediate cabinet reshuffle. [redacted] [redacted] Marcos is being misled by his advisors about public disenchantment with his government and its investigation. In any case, at a time Marcos is taking an increasingly hard line with his perceived enemies, it is clear that he will have to deal with more demonstrations in the weeks ahead. President Reagan's visit or public perception of a government whitewash in the investigation would provide the next flashpoints. Evidence is growing of preparations by both the radical and moderate opposition for major demonstrations timed for the President's visit.

25X1

25X1
25X1

25X1

SECRET

25X1